

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for filtering fluid flowing in a blood vessel during an endovascular procedure, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a vascular filter including an expandable frame and filter material disposed on an elongate member, the expandable frame being constrained in a collapsed condition;

placing an elongate rail within a blood vessel across a treatment site to a location downstream thereof;

advancing the vascular filter member along the rail to the location downstream of the treatment site;

expanding the expandable frame to an enlarged condition across the blood vessel, the vascular filter being slidable with respect to the rail;

performing an endovascular procedure at the treatment site, the vascular filter capturing embolic material released during the procedure;

advancing a retrieval member endovascularly to the location downstream of the treatment site;

securing the vascular filter to the retrieval member; and

withdrawing the vascular filter and retrieval member from the blood vessel.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the endovascular procedure comprises deploying a stent across the treatment site.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more devices used during the endovascular procedure are advanced along the rail to the treatment site.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of directing the expandable frame to its collapsed condition before withdrawing the vascular filter and retrieval member from the blood vessel.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the retrieval member comprises a tubular sheath having a lumen therein, and wherein the expandable frame is directed to its collapsed condition by withdrawing the vascular filter into the lumen of the tubular sheath.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing a vascular filter comprises providing the vascular filter within a lumen of a tubular sheath, the tubular sheath constraining the expandable frame in its collapsed condition, and wherein the step of advancing the vascular filter along the rail comprises advancing a distal end of the tubular sheath over the guidewire with the vascular filter disposed within the lumen.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the expandable frame is biased to assume its enlarged condition, and wherein the step of expanding the expandable frame comprises deploying the vascular filter from the lumen beyond the distal end of the tubular sheath.

8. A vascular filter, comprising:
 - an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end, and including a lumen for receiving a guidewire therethrough;
 - a collar slidable on the elongate member,
 - an expandable frame attached at a first end to the collar, the expandable frame being capable of assuming a collapsed condition and an enlarged condition; and
 - a filter material attached to the expandable frame, the filter material having an open proximal end when the expandable frame assumes its enlarged condition.
9. The vascular filter of claim 8, wherein the expandable frame is biased to assume its enlarged condition.
10. The vascular filter of claim 8, wherein the expandable frame comprises a plurality of struts, each strut having first and second ends, the second end of each strut being attached to the elongate member.
11. The vascular filter of claim 10, wherein the first end of each strut is attached to the collar.
12. The vascular filter of claim 10, wherein each of the struts includes an intermediate region biased to bow outward from the elongate member.

13. The vascular filter of claim 12, wherein the proximal end of the filter material is attached to the intermediate region.